

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and further and favorable consideration of the subject application is respectfully requested and such action is earnestly solicited.

Entry of the present amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 because the Amendment places the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; does not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration because the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; does not present any additional claims; and places the application in better form for an appeal should an appeal be necessary. The Amendment is necessary and was not earlier presented because it is made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection and the Advisory Action mailed February 17, 2004. Entry of the Amendment, reexamination and further and favorable reconsideration of the subject application in light of the following remarks, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, are thus respectfully requested.

By the present amendment, Claims 13-15 have been canceled, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Applicants expressly reserve the right to file a continuation or divisional application on any subject matter canceled by the present amendment. Claim 3 has been amended to correct a typographical error. No new matter has been added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that Claims 1-12 and 16-20 are allowable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)/103(a)

Claims 13 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Malson (U.S. Patent No. 4,963,666). Without conceding to the merits of this rejection, and solely in an effort to expedite prosecution, Claims 13 and 15 have been canceled by the present amendment. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as purportedly anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over EP 0 202 127 (Berg et al.). Without conceding to the merits of this rejection, and solely in an effort to expedite prosecution, Claims 13-15 have been canceled by the present amendment. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 13-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over Berg et al. and Assarson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,901,236). Without conceding to the merits of this rejection, and solely in an effort to expedite prosecution, Claims 13-15 have been canceled by the present amendment. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusions

Applicants respectfully submit that the present amendment overcomes all outstanding rejections and that all remaining claims have been deemed allowable by the Examiner.


From the foregoing, further and favorable consideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested and such action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions concerning this amendment, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicant's undersigned representative so that prosecution may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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